



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

NEWS

ROD R. BLAGOJEVICH – GOVERNOR

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Governor Blagojevich Announces *Click It or Ticket* Enforcement Campaign this Thanksgiving Holiday

IDOT, ISP, local police partnering with NASCAR as Illinois aims for historic low in highway fatalities in 2008

SPRINGFIELD – With highway fatalities down by 22 percent provisionally thus far in 2008, Governor Rod R. Blagojevich today announced an all out *Click It or Ticket* mobilization aimed at saving even more lives during the Thanksgiving Holiday. While Illinois motorists have exceeded the 90 percent safety belt usage mark for the past two years, the new campaign aims to save even more lives by reaching a 100 percent safety belt compliance rate.

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), Illinois State Police (ISP) and local law enforcement agencies are coordinating the statewide law enforcement crackdown. This campaign is coupled with a series of new public service announcements featuring NASCAR drivers, who remind Illinois drivers to buckle up every time they get behind the wheel.

“Law enforcement, community leaders and traffic safety advocates across the state have worked tirelessly to increase safety belt compliance and we are very proud of their success,” said Governor Blagojevich. “Every life counts and that is why it is imperative for us to stay vigilant and work toward raising the safety belt compliance rate beyond 90 percent.”

This year marks the 5th anniversary of Gov. Blagojevich’s signing the primary safety belt law in 2003. During that time statewide safety belt compliance has increased 14.3 percentage points, from 76.2 percent in 2003 to 90.5 percent in 2008. Also, highway fatalities in Illinois have plummeted by more than 200 a year, from a high of 1,454 total fatalities in 2003 to lows not seen since 1924. The downward trend has accelerated in 2008, with fatalities down by 22 percent on a provisional basis as of mid November, from 1,090 at this time last year to 888.

“Illinois has achieved remarkable gains in saving lives on our highways under the leadership of Governor Blagojevich but with nearly one out of 10 motorists unbuckled on Illinois roadways, we still have more work to do,” said IDOT Secretary Milton R. Sees. “Regular safety belt use is the most effective way to reduce fatalities and serious injuries in motor vehicle crashes. Illinois

Department of Transportation's Division of Traffic Safety commends NASCAR for their part in ensuring that every Illinois driver buckles up."

When worn correctly, safety belts reduce the risk of fatal injury to front-seat passenger car occupants by 45 percent and by 60 percent in pickup trucks, SUVs and minivans.

"The Illinois State Police remains dedicated to reducing fatalities on Illinois roadways during the upcoming holiday season," said Illinois State Police Director Larry G. Trent. "Our officers are determined to achieve a record low fatality rate during 2008, by enforcing safety belt and child safety seat laws during the *Click It or Ticket* Mobilization."

During this campaign, more than 135 local, state and county law enforcement agencies will dedicate 15,000 hours of enforcement details from November 17th through November 30th. The Illinois campaign is supported by a projected \$325,000 in paid advertising featuring NASCAR drivers.

NHTSA estimates safety belt compliance decreases by approximately 10 percentage points at night. Even though only 25 percent of travel occurs at night, the fatality rate per vehicle mile of travel is about three times higher at that time than during the day. Nationwide, nearly half of motor vehicle fatalities occur at night. IDOT's Division of Traffic Safety will focus on raising the nighttime safety belt compliance to 90.5 percent by challenging law enforcement agencies to hold 25 percent of enforcement at night.

For more information, on the *Click It or Ticket* campaign or to download outreach materials for use in your community, please visit www.buckleupillinois.org.